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Summary record of the 1584th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 28 February 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Leinarte

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Combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Suriname

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Suriname (*continued*)
(CEDAW/C/SUR/4-6; CEDAW/C/SUR/Q/4-6 and CEDAW/C/SUR/Q/4-6/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Suriname took places at the Committee table.*

2. **The Chair** said that, at the invitation of the Committee, other members of the delegation would be speaking via video link from Paramaribo.

3. **Mr. Eskak** (Suriname), introducing his country's periodic report, said that the National Development Plan for the period 2017–2021 took into account commitments in respect of gender equality and women's empowerment as well as sustainable development; the former were acknowledged to be prerequisites for the latter. The strategic goal of the plan was to ensure that laws, regulations and policies in the public and private sectors guaranteed the right to personal security and freedom for women and men and that gender stereotyping did not restrict opportunities. To implement the plan, the Council of Ministers had recently approved measures to improve research and planning at the individual ministry level and a standardized approach to the submission of project proposals and the reporting thereon; was due to be developed.

4. At the legislative level, the Ministry of Labour was currently working on a bill on equal treatment. Consultations on that bill, and on a parallel bill to prevent harassment in the workplace, were currently under way with civil society and other stakeholders. The Ministry of Home Affairs, meanwhile, was considering proposals to establish a dedicated bureau to handle gender discrimination-related complaints. Legislation on identity documents had been revised and would be ready for approval by the National Assembly by the end of March 2018. Furthermore, measures had been taken to strengthen the human resources of the Bureau of Gender Affairs and a judicial officer had been appointed to identify and address the cause of delays in the adoption of the aforementioned bills and other pending laws including, inter alia, legislation on holidays entitlements and the regulation of accidents.

5. Women's representation in the National Assembly had increased slightly as a result of government- and NGO-backed projects, such as the "Ook Zij" (She too) campaign, to promote women's participation in decision-making processes and their involvement in political and public life. Further measures were planned in the run-up to the 2020 general election, in partnership with NGOs and international agencies.

6. The national policy on domestic violence was currently being updated. An evaluation of the protection order system, which was one of the protective mechanisms available under the law on combating domestic violence, was also due to be conducted in the course of 2018. As the 1,400 domestic violence cases reported annually were known not to reflect the true incidence of the phenomenon, with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) steps had been taken to pilot a new system for recording cases. The pilot project would be implemented in two districts in the first quarter of 2018; an evaluation would be conducted after three months.

7. Although street prostitution was a criminal offence, the police exercised tolerance and in practice only sex workers who committed other offences, such as public order offences, were prosecuted. No specific data on such arrests were available because sex workers were arrested not on the basis of their occupation but on suspicion of criminal activity. That approach prevented their stigmatization, inter alia. In cooperation with the NGO New Beginnings Consulting Services, the Ministry of Health had launched a programme to promote the economic empowerment of sex workers that was open not only to women sex workers but also to men who had sex with men, and transgender persons. Potential participants were currently being screened.

8. To strengthen efforts to tackle human trafficking, the provisions of the revised Criminal Code extended jurisdiction to nationals who committed trafficking offences in

other countries and there was no statute of limitations for trafficking offences. Regular awareness-raising programmes were carried out, including campaigns specifically targeting women, who could be perpetrators as well as victims. Trafficking victims of both sexes had access to a shelter.

9. In spite of efforts to improve the national data-collection system, a lack of appropriate disaggregated data continued to impede evidence-based policy development and accurate measurement of the State's progress towards fulfilment of its national and international commitments. Against that backdrop, along with three other Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries, and in implementation of an agreement with UN-Women signed in 2016, Suriname had committed to piloting the CARICOM gender equality indicators model. Use of that model would help the Government to address key policy concerns identified under the Convention, the Beijing Platform for Action and other international instruments, besides providing an opportunity to address any shortcomings in its data-collection and analysis systems, including any gaps in indicators for monitoring progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 5.

10. In order to increase gender awareness among policymakers in particular, a presentation on gender issues would be given to members of the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly later in the current month. The Bureau of Gender Affairs planned to implement awareness-raising programmes relating to the provisions of the Convention and training on the Convention would also be provided, within the framework of International Women's Day, to NGOs working on women's issues. Despite budget constraints and capacity limitations, the Government remained committed to promoting the conditions for gender equality and the full exercise of women's rights.

Articles 1 to 6

11. **Ms. Hayashi**, noting that, under the Constitution, international agreements took precedence over national law, asked whether the delegation could provide specific examples of gender discrimination cases in which the provisions of the Convention had been invoked, and how those provisions were implemented at national level, including within the judicial and the administrative systems, more generally. Information on the status of the bill to establish a constitutional court would be appreciated, as would information on the work of the National Human Rights Institute, including its mandate with regard to gender equality. She would specifically like to know whether the bureau that would be established to handle gender discrimination-related complaints would fall under the Institute's remit or would operate as a separate entity.

12. An explanation as to the reasons behind the delays in the adoption of various bills, including those on gender equality, harassment in the workplace and maternity rights, would be helpful, as well as an indication of the measures envisaged to accelerate their passage and the time frame for enactment.

13. She also invited the delegation to comment on reports that the Government disregarded the land rights of indigenous peoples and that members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community has been arbitrarily arrested and detained. What steps were being taken to eliminate discrimination against those vulnerable groups? It would likewise be helpful to know whether the State party had conducted any training sessions or research in connection with the Committee's general recommendation No. 33 (2015), on women's access to justice, or had made any legislative changes in line with its provisions, for example, in relation to legal aid. In that context, she noted that concerns had been raised previously about access to justice, including the provision of legal aid, and also about discrimination within the judicial system, particularly against indigenous and tribal communities.

14. In the light of the Human Rights Committee's recommendation regarding the investigation, prosecution and punishment of cases of gender-based violence (CCPR/C/SUR/CO/3, para. 26), she invited the delegation to provide a brief overview of the accessibility of justice mechanisms, including effective remedies for victims of violence, for women and girls.

15. **Mr. Eskak** (Suriname) said that the principle of equality was enshrined in the Constitution, which prohibited discrimination on any grounds. A definition of discrimination had been incorporated into the legal framework, including the revised Criminal Code.

16. While no specific mechanisms or procedures were in place to safeguard women's rights under the Convention, the Legal Aid Bureau supplied legal counsels free of charge in all areas of law to those with limited means. No quality assessments of the services provided by the Bureau had been conducted.

17. The Bureau of Gender Affairs fell within the remit of the Ministry of Home Affairs. It was responsible for developing and implementing gender-related policies and cooperated with partners including international and civil society organizations. Its activities included organizing training and awareness-raising activities. The National Human Rights Institute was expected to become fully operational by 2020. The complaints mechanism being considered by the Ministry of Home Affairs would form part of the Bureau of Gender Affairs. The mechanism would operate as the first port of call for all matters relating to gender: citizens would be able to submit complaints and suggestions relating to gender issues.

18. As regards delays impeding the adoption of key legislation, it was important to note that the Bureau of Gender Affairs had recently undergone major reforms. However, a judicial officer had been appointed to address those delays.

19. **Ms. Mac Intosh** (Suriname) said that the Government was committed to protecting the land rights of indigenous and tribal communities and had sought expert advice from the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples. Dialogue with those communities was ongoing and would continue until a nationwide solution was found. Indigenous and tribal peoples were part of Surinamese society and held positions in the Government, the judiciary and the legislature.

20. **Ms. Bethel** said that she wished to know whether the Convention was self-executing in the State party and, if so, how women could enforce their rights thereunder. Noting that article 8 of the Constitution prohibited discrimination on any grounds while the revised Criminal Code criminalized hate speech, employment discrimination and discrimination in the exercise of a profession on the basis of sexual orientation, she enquired as to what steps had been taken to uphold the rights of the LGBTI community, as enshrined in the Constitution and the Criminal Code, and what was being done to enforce the laws on hate speech and employment discrimination based on sexual orientation.

21. **Ms. Ameline** asked whether the State party had drafted a specific plan on women and peace and security, and how the Government viewed the role of women in security and the consolidation of the rule of law. She would appreciate the delegation's comments on the link between the Sustainable Development Goals and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, given that the resolution recognized the undervalued and underutilized contributions that women made to peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

22. **Mr. Eskak** (Suriname) said that no study had yet been conducted on general recommendation No. 33. Discussions on the rights of LGBTI persons were under way. Religious groups had raised the most objections.

23. **Ms. Reijme** (Suriname) said that there had been no cases in which the provisions of the Convention had been directly invoked in court. However, the provisions of the Convention had been taken into consideration when drafting the law on combating domestic violence, which had been applied in both domestic violence and stalking cases.

24. **Ms. Malone** (Suriname) said that the Criminal Code, as amended in 2015, expressly criminalized occupational discrimination, incitement to hatred or violence, defamation by publication and condoning discriminatory action on the basis of sexuality. The Government had taken steps to raise awareness of those amendments among the wider public and would continue to do so.

25. **Ms. Song** said that, while commendable efforts had been made to improve the national machinery, major government institutions for gender equality had yet to take shape. She invited the delegation to comment on the current status of the Bureau of Gender Affairs, particularly as regards to whether it was sufficiently funded and staffed and whether the job description for gender focal points had been approved. Noting that the State party had cited inadequate influence of the gender focal points as a constraint in implementing the National Gender Action Plan, she wondered what action the State party had taken to overcome that challenge. She also wondered whether the Government had provided training for the staff of the National Human Rights Institute on gender issues and women's rights under the Convention. Lastly, she would appreciate clarification as to whether the National Gender Policy Plan for the period 2016–2020 had been finalized; if it had, whether it was the successor of the Gender Work Plan for 2013; what the plan's priorities were; and whether a special budget had been established for its implementation.

26. **Ms. Ameline** said that the State party might consider using temporary special measures to provide support for indigenous women in pursuing careers and establishing an official mechanism to implement the Committee's concluding observations and structure the national dialogue.

27. **Ms. Reijme** (Suriname) said that proposals for a new organizational structure that would strengthen the Bureau of Gender Affairs had been submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs and would be discussed in the coming month. The job descriptions for the gender focal points had been completed and were pending approval by the Ministry. The Gender Work Plan had been evaluated in 2015 and the findings had been integrated into the baseline report drawn up with support from UNFPA. The State party was thus in a position to proceed with preparation of the National Gender Policy for the period 2018–2021. Education, violence, decision-making, labour and health had been identified as priority areas. The Bureau of Gender Affairs had its own budget and counted on the support of United Nations agencies to help it to overcome constraints. A team of 20 trainers attached to the Bureau of Gender Affairs assisted other government ministries and NGOs in their gender mainstreaming efforts.

28. **Ms. Song** said that rural women in all areas of economic life should also be taken into consideration when formulating the National Gender Policy Plan. Noting the State party's reliance on NGOs that often faced funding difficulties, she asked whether the Government provided such organizations with any financial support.

29. **Ms. Bethel** asked what percentage of the national budget was allocated to the Bureau of Gender Affairs, and what forms of gender inequality would anchor the National Gender Policy Plan. Given that reliable data would be needed to execute, monitor and evaluate action under the Plan, she would like to know how the State party planned to move forward in setting up an institution or mechanism to collect the necessary data.

30. **Mr. Eskak** (Suriname) said that the Government had embarked on unprecedented and sweeping reforms of the public sector. Information and communications technology played an important role in improving data collection. The General Bureau of Statistics used the gender indicators of the United Nations to compile gender data.

31. **Ms. Reijme** (Suriname) said that the CARICOM gender equality indicators would yield some of the data required to formulate the National Gender Policy. In addition, the Government had implemented the CariSECURE project initiated by the United Nations Development Programme. A corresponding task force, responsible for developing data recording and analysis techniques for use in the formulation of anti-crime policy, had been established.

32. The Government supported NGOs and community-based organizations by providing equipment, training and airtime on broadcasting networks. Furthermore, two employees of the NGO Stop Violence against Women received salaries from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

33. **Ms. Gbedemah** asked when the State party intended to develop long-term national programmes, strategies and indicators to combat gender stereotyping, as well as tools to monitor and assess the impact of activities to raise gender awareness; when the Ministry of

Education would integrate the basic life skills programme, which addressed gender equality as related to culture and tradition, into the school curriculum; when the current programme content would be audited to ensure that gender stereotypes were eliminated; when the programme would be reviewed; and what barriers hindered the implementation of long-term structural policies to eliminate gender stereotypes.

34. Since the vast majority of management positions in broadcasting were held by men, despite a large female audience, and television programming reinforced the traditional view of the role of women, she would appreciate information about any action being taken to tackle gender stereotyping and sexist content in the media. Whereas in the past a media council had monitored advertisements and prevented the broadcasting of content that reinforced gender stereotypes, no such council was currently active. She would therefore like to know whether such content was still monitored and, if it was, how many advertisements had been taken down, and by whom. She would also like details of any efforts made to raise awareness of gender stereotyping among advertising agencies and media corporations, and any research conducted to determine the extent of the problem.

35. **Ms. Arocha Dominguez** said she noted that the National Policy Plan on Domestic Violence for the period 2014–2017 had yet to be formally adopted and was, even now, in the process of being revised. She wished to know what obstacles were preventing the Plan's approval, particularly since it was intended to implement the law on combating domestic violence enacted in 2009; whether other related plans or programmes had been implemented, and, if so, which entity was responsible for their coordination and evaluation; and whether the draft Plan related only to domestic violence or covered other forms of violence against women. In that connection, she wondered whether the State party intended to review and update the law on combating domestic violence to take account of all forms of violence against women, and whether the bill on harassment in the workplace was ready for adoption. Lastly, referring to the 2016 concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/SUR/CO/3-4), she asked what action the State party had taken to prevent and combat the corporal punishment of children.

36. **Ms. Bethel**, while welcoming the State party's efforts to combat human trafficking, which had included ratifying the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, said that the State party still did not meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons, as outlined in the United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report 2017. Noting that Suriname remained a source, transit and destination country for the trafficking of women and girls for the purposes of sexual exploitation or forced labour, and that the number of cases of trafficking in the country's remote interior had actually increased in recent years, she asked what specific challenges the State party faced in terms of improving the quality of data collected on trafficking of women and girls, ensuring full implementation of human trafficking-related laws and national policies, and developing appropriate regulations for more effective enforcement of the legislation.

37. She was concerned that, according to paragraph 58 of the State party report, most trafficking victims only received assistance from their family, friends or NGOs and the State party had just one shelter able to accommodate 20 trafficking victims. She wondered whether the Government intended to create additional facilities, in particular in remote areas, and what support and assistance were provided to victims by the State. She also asked whether women victims of trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation were offered immunity from criminal prosecution; how many arrests, prosecutions and convictions for trafficking there had been; what sentences had been handed down; and what training and awareness-raising activities were conducted for public officials, including law enforcement and border officers, and for civil society and indigenous and tribal communities. Lastly, she wondered what laws and policies were in place to ensure that foreign victims of trafficking, such as women from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, were provided with appropriate protection and access to asylum procedures in Suriname.

38. **Ms. Reijme** (Suriname) said that a number of measures had been taken to combat gender stereotypes. For example, the television channel of the National Assembly regularly broadcast programmes on the subject to raise public awareness. Training sessions were also frequently held to sensitize parliamentarians and other target groups.

39. **Mr. Eskak** (Suriname) said it was hoped that the bills on equality of treatment and on harassment in the workplace would be ready for submission to the National Assembly by the end of March 2018. Although there was no specific legislation prohibiting the use of corporal punishment, cases of violence against children were dealt with under the Civil and Criminal Codes, the law on combatting domestic violence and other relevant laws. Protection measures were initiated in accordance with the seriousness of the case and could include placing the child in the temporary care of the Bureau for Family Law Affairs. There were currently three child protection centres, where adults and children alike were able to seek information or report cases of violence against girls and boys. The Ministry of Justice and Police was working with the United Nations Children's Fund to evaluate the effectiveness of those centres with a view to establishing more across the country. Admittedly, a number of laws, such as the Civil Code and a law establishing a children's ombudsman, needed to be updated or enacted to provide better protection for children. That said, the adoption of specific legislation alone would not necessarily eliminate corporal punishment. Parenting education programmes, as well as training for teachers and other professionals working with children on a daily basis, were also required.

40. **Mr. Akkal** (Suriname) said that the Ministry of Justice and Police was currently planning raids in areas potentially used by traffickers in the country's interior. There was currently no demand for additional shelters — or safe houses — for trafficking victims, since sufficient places were already available. In that connection, a policy compliant with the Trafficking in Persons Protocol was in place to enable foreign women who were victims of trafficking to apply for leave to remain in Suriname. Information on legal and asylum procedures was provided to foreign victims as soon as they were rescued from traffickers. The interministerial working group set up to combat trafficking in persons had 35 trainers who conducted training on trafficking in persons for government departments, police officers, labour inspectors and other public officials. Awareness-raising was carried out on national and local radio and television networks, including in remote areas, and a campaign had been launched on the website of the national police. Data on trafficking was currently being collected by the police and the Public Prosecution Office, and there were plans to establish a specialized entity to standardize the process.

41. **Ms. Reijme** (Suriname) said that two projects to improve sexual and reproductive health education had been developed. Under the first, primary schoolteachers received technical assistance and training in how best to discuss issues such as sexuality with children. Under the second, the basic life skills programme, which included comprehensive sexuality education and gender-equality teaching, was to be introduced into primary and secondary school curricula; the programme would be trialled in seven schools in the current academic year before being rolled out to all primary schools nationwide.

42. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that, while the information provided was useful, her questions had specifically related to what the State party was doing to break down gender stereotypes in general and prevent stereotyping in the media in particular. She urged the delegation to respond to her concerns, including, inter alia, by providing details of activities undertaken to promote women's rights and counter negative images of women in the media.

43. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** said that she would be interested to know what regulations were being implemented and actions being taken to combat domestic violence, in view of the fact that the National Policy Plan on Domestic Violence 2014–2017 had yet to be formally adopted.

44. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would welcome clarification about the specific measures being undertaken to combat human trafficking in the country's interior regions. She would also appreciate answers to her questions regarding the services and support provided to trafficking victims in the country's shelter; the number of traffickers arrested, prosecuted and convicted; the nature of the sentences imposed; and immunity from prosecution for victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

45. **Mr. Eskak** (Suriname) said that the media was free and thus able to broadcast adverts of its choosing. However, programmes aimed at challenging gender stereotypes were regularly shown on certain television channels, including the Government's own station. Regarding domestic violence, pending implementation of the National Policy Plan

on Domestic Violence, the regulations in force were those contained in, among others, the law on combating domestic violence.

46. **Mr. Akkal** (Suriname) said that, in addition to awareness-raising activities on local radio stations, measures to combat trafficking included police patrols in remote parts of the country, sometimes in cooperation with the International Criminal Police Organization. Counselling and other services were provided to trafficking victims in partnership with the country's psychiatric institute. Under the revised Criminal Code, the maximum penalty for traffickers was life imprisonment. Judges were empowered to hand down sentences proportionate to the gravity of the offence.

47. **Ms. Reijme** (Suriname) said that, while efforts to encourage media organizations to participate in training on gender stereotypes had so far been unsuccessful, renewed endeavours would be made in that regard. Research on gender stereotypes was conducted by the Anton de Kom University of Suriname and was used to shape policymaking.

48. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that, while a free media was commendable, in order to bring about changes in mentality, monitoring mechanisms were necessary to tackle adverts that perpetuated traditional gender roles and stereotypes.

49. **Ms. Reijme** (Suriname) said that adverts that showed women and men in traditional gender roles were often used in training to demonstrate the problem with gender stereotypes. More and more companies were, however, portraying women and men in less traditional roles.

Articles 7 to 9

50. **Ms. Ameline** said that, according to the State party report, women did not generally occupy high-level posts. While the various awareness-raising and other activities undertaken to increase women's representation were commendable, she was concerned that a more structured approach was sorely needed. She wondered whether the State party envisaged devising a more comprehensive strategy and implementing temporary special measures to ensure women's equal participation in public and political life, including the use of quotas, financial incentives and even penalties for non-compliance.

51. **Ms. Narain** said that the 2014 amendment of the 1975 law regulating Surinamese nationality, although welcomed, seemed not to have retroactive effect. In the light of article 9 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations No. 30, on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, and No. 32, on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, she would appreciate more information on the administrative barriers that reportedly prevented children born to foreign parents in Suriname from acquiring Surinamese nationality at birth. She particularly wished to know whether discriminatory practices hampered the process of effective birth registration, potentially resulting in statelessness; and, if so, how the Government planned to eradicate those practices in order to ensure that no girls born to foreign parents in Suriname before 2014 became stateless. It would also be instructive to learn whether it was the case that indigenous and tribal peoples, and in particular indigenous women, faced persistent structural discrimination that prevented them from registering the births of their children, as had been reported. If such discrimination did indeed exist, what legislative and administrative measures were planned to facilitate birth registration in all communities?

52. **Ms. Malone** (Suriname) said that her country recognized the importance of ensuring that women were well represented at all levels of political and public life. However, a quota system was not the only means of achieving that aim. In preparation for the forthcoming elections, consideration would be given to a number of strategies for increasing the participation of women in political and public life, including awareness-raising.

53. **Ms. Ameline** said that, in the short term, quota systems were the best means of increasing the representation of women. It would be interesting to learn why women were better represented in the diplomatic service than in other areas of public life.

54. **Ms. Malone** (Suriname) said that the strong representation of women in the diplomatic service reflected the importance that the Government attached to the

representation of women in decision-making positions more generally. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs took into account the gender balance of any delegations sent to represent Suriname at the international level and recommended that other ministries did the same.

Article 10–14

55. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that she would like to know whether temporary special measures had been introduced to encourage girls to study subjects that would improve their employment prospects. With regard to tertiary education in particular, she would appreciate clarification regarding the statistics on women's participation included in the State party report, which indicated that, even if female students outnumbered their male counterparts, the overall number in higher education was extremely low. On a separate point, she wondered what measures would be taken to improve access to education for indigenous and Maroon girls with disabilities, girls living in the interior, girls belonging to minority groups and girls living in poverty — all of whom experienced multiple discrimination — and what was being done to ensure that education remained accessible to girls belonging to those groups.

56. It was unclear what steps had been taken to address the disparity in school enrolment rates between children living in urban areas and those living in the interior; what had been done to expand the delivery of education in indigenous and tribal languages; what efforts had been made to improve the quality of the education provided in rural areas; what measures had been taken to encourage teachers to accept positions in rural areas; whether there were plans to build more schools closer to children's homes; and whether consideration would be given to the possibility of using other tools, such as information and communication technologies, to improve the provision of education in rural areas.

57. She also wished to know how the Government's engagement with the dedicated platform mentioned in the opening statement would improve the lives of LGBTI pupils and create a positive learning environment; whether a well-publicized complaints procedure was in place; and, if so, how many cases had been resolved through the imposition of a penalty.

58. It would likewise be helpful if the delegation could indicate what oversight mechanisms had been introduced to prevent pregnant teenagers from being expelled from school; what sanctions were imposed in the event of non-compliance; how many teenagers had been affected; and where those teenagers lived. In addition, she would appreciate an explanation of the rationale behind the decision to offer pregnant teenagers the opportunity to continue their education through training courses offered by the Ministry of Labour and NGOs. What subjects were covered in those training courses and how long did they last? With regard to sexuality education, she wished to draw attention to the standards set out in the Committee's general recommendation No. 36 (2017), on the right of girls and women to education. Lastly, she asked whether the age for completion of compulsory education would be raised to 16 years.

59. **Mr. Bergby** said that he wished to know whether article 28 of the Constitution, which established the principle of equal work for equal pay, would be brought fully into line with the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which provided for a right to equal remuneration for work of equal value, and, if not, whether labour legislation would be amended to establish that right; whether the State party planned to conduct a survey to compare the work done by women and men respectively; when ILO Convention No. 100 and the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), which had both recently been ratified, would be implemented; and what resources would be set aside for their implementation.

60. He would appreciate an explanation as to the increase in the female unemployment rate over the period 2004–2012, during which time the male unemployment rate had actually fallen, and the large disparity between the male and female labour force participation rates in 2016. It was unclear what specific measures were planned to promote the employment of women, in particular women belonging to minority groups, indigenous and Maroon women, and women living in poverty, and what prevented the State party from

immediately abolishing the dormant provisions of the Civil Servants' Act (*Personeelswet*) under which a female civil servant could be dismissed if she married.

61. He wondered whether the Minimum Hour Wage Act had entered into force; what its effect had been or would be; whether it would apply to both the public and private sectors; and how the informal sector could be regulated in that connection. With regard to labour segregation, he would like to know how the State party planned to increase the number of women working in those sectors of the economy in which wages were higher than average.

62. He would be grateful if the delegation could lay out the proposed timeline for the adoption of the bill on harassment in the workplace and indicate what resources would be set aside for its implementation and whether it would be enforced in both the public and private sectors. The timeline for adoption of the draft civil code, which would provide for mandatory paid maternity leave for all employees, was also unclear. He wished to know whether women working in the informal sector would qualify for mandatory paid maternity leave under the draft civil code and, if not, what provision could be made for such women. Lastly, he wondered whether consideration had been given to the possibility of making provision for paternity leave, even if only of a few weeks in duration.

63. **Ms. Arocha Dominguez**, seeking more information on the provision of health-care services in remote areas and among vulnerable groups, asked what specific programmes had been organized in remote areas of the interior; whether the emergency health-care services provided in those areas were adequate in terms of, inter alia, medical facilities and human resources; and what measures had been taken to address nutritional deficiencies, combat water contamination and prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including, in particular, HIV infection. In addition, she would appreciate more information on the decentralized programmes, in particular prevention programmes, organized to combat cervical, womb and breast cancer. It was unclear whether the sexual and reproductive health programmes organized in the State party were accompanied by medical, family planning and STI prevention services.

64. She wondered whether NGOs and legislators were actively considering the possibility of abolishing the legislative provisions under which a penalty could be imposed on a woman who underwent an abortion and whether the impact of unsafe abortions on the maternal mortality rate and the frequency of obstetric complications had been studied. It would also be useful to know whether contraceptives were widely available; whether they were frequently used; whether the frequency of their use had been found to correlate with rates of STIs, including HIV infection; what treatment was available for HIV-positive persons, in particular women; and whether such treatment, including antiretroviral therapy, was provided free of charge or was subsidized. Lastly, in the specific context of health care, she wished to know what steps had been taken to protect women from discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, HIV status, and sexual orientation or gender identity.

65. **Ms. Lamsberg-Macnack** (Suriname) said that the Medical Mission was responsible for the provision of health-care services in the interior. However, certain procedures, including screening for breast cancer, were available only in the capital. There were currently no plans to amend the provisions of the Criminal Code under which abortion was punishable. The Government was currently preparing to conduct a study on maternal mortality. Several NGOs and health services provided sexual and reproductive health education, including in schools. One of those NGOs was the Lobi foundation health centre, which also provided family planning services and screening for breast and cervical cancer.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.